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St. Peter at the Gate

by

Joseph Bert Smiley

My name is "SMILEY."

I Write Poetry.

I wrote this book, called ST. PETER AT THE GATE. I publish this book to sell for fifty cents a copy.

I have a book of poems called MEDITATIONS, and another called A BASKET OF CHIPS. I have these books to sell at one dollar each in cloth binding, and at twenty five cents each in paper binding.

I publish a newspaper called SMILEY'S ENTERPRISE, which is a country weekly, and is in trouble most of the time. I charge one dollar a year for this paper.

I am going to publish a newspaper called SMILEY'S WEEKLY, as soon as I get enough orders to constitute a good subscription list. This paper will be a literary and humorous paper, with the poetry on page seven. I shall charge one dollar a year for this paper. If you want it, please send me your order on a postal card. I would like to have a large number of these orders.

Address,

J. B. SMILEY,
Galesburg, Mich.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 20th day of April, A. D. 1893.

R. G. SMITH.
Notary Public in and for Kalamazoo County, Michigan.

St. Peter at the Gate.

CARTOON EDITION.

—A POEM BY—

JOSEPH BERT SMILEY.

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THE ENTERPRISE.
GALESBURG, MICHIGAN
1893.

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ST. PETER AT THE GATE.

ST. PETER stood guard at the golden gate
With a solemn mein and an air sedate.
When up to the top of the golden stair
A man and a woman, ascending there,
Applied for admission. They came and stood
Before St. Peter, so great and good,
In hope the City of Peace to win,—
And asked St. Peter to let them in.

* * * * They came and stood
Before St Peter, so great and good
* * * * * * * * *
The man kept still, while the woman spoke

The woman was tall, and lank, and thin,
With a scraggly beardlet upon her chin.
The man was short, and thick and stout.
His stomach was built so it rounded out.
His face was pleasant, and all the while
He wore a kindly and genial smile.
The choirs in the distance the echoes woke.
And the man kept still while the woman spoke.

"Oh thou who guardest the gate," said she,
"We two come hither, beseeching thee
To let us enter the heavenly land,
And play our harps with the angel band.
Of me, St. Peter, there is no doubt,
There's nothing from heaven to bar *me* out.
I've been to meeting three times a week,
And almost always I'd rise and speak.

I've told the sinners about the day
When they'd repent of their evil way,
I've told my neighbors – I've told 'em all
'Bout Adam and Eve, and the Primal Fall,
I've shown them what they'd have to do
If they'd pass in with the chosen few.
I've marked their path of duty clear,—
Laid out the plan for their whole career.

I've talked and talked to 'em, loud and long,
For my lungs are good, and my voice is strong.
So, good St. Peter, you'll clearly see
The gate of heaven is open for *me*,
But my old man, I regret to say,
Hasn't walked in exactly the narrow way.
He smokes and he swears, and grave faults he's got,
And I don't know whether he'll pass or not.

HE never would pray with an earnest vim,
Or go to revival, or join in a hymn.
So I had to leave him in sorrow there
While I, with the chosen, united in prayer.
He ate what the pantry chanced to afford,
While I, in my purity, sang to the Lord,
And if cucumbers were all he got
Its a chance if he merited *them* or not.

But, Oh, St. Peter, I love him so
To the pleasures of heaven *please* let him go!
I've done enough—a saint *I've* been.
Won't *that* atone? Can't you let him in?
By my grim gospel I know 'tis so
That the unrepentant must fry below,
But isn't there *some* way you can see
That he may enter who's dear to *me*?

It's a *narrow* gospel by which I pray
But the chosen expect to find *some* way
Of coaxing, or fooling, or bribing you
So that *their* relation can amble through.
And say, St. Peter, it seems to me
This gate isn't kept as it ought to be.
You ought to stand right by the opening there
And never sit down in that easy chair.

And say, St. Peter, my sight is dimmed,
But I don't like the way your whiskers are trimmed.
They're cut too wide, and outward toss;
They'd look better narrow, cut straight across.
Well, we must be going, our crowns to win,
So open, St. Peter, and we'll pass in!"

* * * * * * * * * *

T. PETER sat quiet, and stroked his staff,
But, spite of his office, he had to laugh,
Then said, with a fiery gleam in his eye,
"Who's tending this gateway,—you or I?"
And then he arose, in his stature tall,
And pressed a button, upon the wall,
And said to the imp who answered the bell
"Escort this female around to hell!"

* * * * * * * * *

And pressed a button upon the wall
And said to the imp who answered the bell
"Escort this female around to hell "

THE man stood still as a piece of stone,—
Stood sadly, gloomily there alone.
A life-long, settled idea he had
That his wife was good and he was bad.
He thought if the woman went down below
That he would certainly have to go.—
That if *she* went to the regions dim
There wasn't the ghost of a show for *him*.

Slowly he turned, by habit bent
To follow wherever the woman went.
St. Peter, standing on duty there,
Observed that the top of his head was bare.
He called the gentleman back, and said
"Friend how long hast thou been wed?"
"Thirty years" (with a weary sigh)—
And then he thoughtfully added "Why?"

He called the gentleman back and said
"Friend, how long hast thou been wed?"

St. Peter was silent. With head bent down
He raised his hand and scratched his crown.
Then, seeming a different thought to take,
Slowly, half to himself, he spake.
"*Thirty years* with that woman there?
No wonder the man hasn't any hair!
Swearing is wicked. Smoke's not good.
He smoked and swore,—I should think he would!

Thirty years with that tongue so sharp?
Ho! *Angel Gabriel!* GIVE HIM A HARP!
A jeweled harp with a golden string!
Good Sir, pass in where the angels sing!
Gabriel, give him a seat alone,—
One with a cushion,—up near the throne!
Call up some angels to play their best.
Let him enjoy the music, *and rest.*

They gave him a harp with golden strings.
A glittering robe and a pair of wings

See that on finest Ambrosia he feeds.
He's had about all the hell he needs.
It isn't just hardly the thing to do
To roast him on earth and the future too."

* * * * * * * * *

They gave him a harp with golden strings,
A glittering robe, and a pair of wings,
And he said as he entered the Realm of Day,
"Well this beats cucumbers, anyway!"
And so the Scriptures had come to pass
"*The last shall be first and the first shall be last.*"

"Well, this beats *cucumbers*, anyway"

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